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HISTORICAL COMMISSION
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ARTICLE __. Community Preservation Act – Historical Preservation (Amherst Historical Commission)

Proposed Fiscal Year 2012 CPA Historic Preservation Projects

The following draft FY2012 CPA proposals represent the ongoing historic preservation priorities of the Town of Amherst as recommended by the Amherst Historical Commission on December 7, 2010 in implementation of the Amherst Preservation Plan, other historic preservation planning, and assessment of community needs. Funding for historic preservation projects will be sought through Town Meeting appropriations of Community Preservation Act funds, state and other grants, private donations, and Town Meeting appropriation of local tax revenue through the capital budget. This FY 2012 historic preservation budget is a working document and may be subject to change and adjustment.

I. Historic Preservation Capital Projects

Cost

Individual building/site projects:

➤ West Cemetery: Restoration of historic cast iron fencing that surrounds the Dickinson and Cutler family plots	\$50,000
➤ Town Clerk: Archival materials conservation/restoration	\$10,000
➤ Amherst Historical Society & Museum: Structural and feasibility study	\$35,000
➤ North Amherst Community Farm:	
~ Emergency repairs for stabilization of large barn and carriage house	\$15,000
~ Structural evaluation and feasibility study for rehabilitation and adaptive (seasonal) reuse of barn and carriage house	\$10,000
➤ Jones Library:	
~ Chimney restoration (<i>Not yet presented to Commission</i>)	\$113,000
~ Conservation of historic paintings	\$15,000
➤ North Amherst Library rehabilitation:	
~ Foundation stabilization	\$10,000
~ Insulation to preserve collections	\$11,000
➤ Hope Community Church rehabilitation:	
~ Roof	\$26,000
~ Foundation and drainage	\$19,000
➤ 235 East Pleasant Street: Feasibility study for rehabilitation and preservation options of existing farmhouse	\$10,000
➤ Hawthorne house restoration (<i>Not yet presented to Commission</i>)	\$81,000
TOTAL NEW FY2012 PROJECTS	\$405,000

II. Previously-Obligated Funds

Cost

Individual building/site projects:

▪ 575 North East Street compensation (year 5 of 5)	\$25,600
▪ Town Hall masonry (year 3 of 10)	\$28,350
FY 2012 Total	\$458,950

➤ **Amherst Historical Society & Museum: Structural and feasibility study**

\$35,000

1. Feasibility of the project: Members of the Board of Trustees is comprised of professional architects, historians and designers who will lend oversight to the project, which is the upshot of an 18-month long range planning effort undertaken by the Board.
2. Urgency of the project: Currently, the Historical Society is housed in the Strong House, which is not insulated or equipped with climate control to preserve the 1,500 plus artifacts stored onsite, and does not have the structural integrity to allow visitors on the second floor (even only one or two staff people are allowed in the same room due to inadequate structural loading of the house).
3. Population(s) to be served by the project: The vision of the Board is to develop a museum, storage facility, and community space that can serve Amherst for 150 years.
4. Acquisition or preservation of threatened resources: The Amherst Historical Society is the home of Amherst's history and culture, containing over 1,500 artifacts.
5. Possibility of multiple sources of funding: The Museum does not have an endowment but has access to member donations, private local grants, competitive private foundation grants and, if sponsored by the Town, to state historic preservation grants. It is expected that this study will help clarify the funding sources need for the capital improvements.
6. Complete description of project addressing cost: The project is the first step necessary to preserve and possibly expand the Strong House and the Society's collection. The study is to determine:
 - ~ The structural integrity of the Strong house, as well as its ability to withstand the impacts of any improvements—a rear addition, foundation work, etc.
 - ~ The size, configuration and cost of a climate-controlled storage facility for the collection.
 - ~ Construction cost estimates, including the ability of the Historical Society to fundraise
7. Documentation: Please see attached letter with cost estimates
8. Projected timeline for initiation and completion of project: Project expected to be implemented as soon as possible, with a timeframe of 6-8 months for completion of the study. Completion of these projects would be at the discretion of the Museum. Funds would not be disbursed until work had been inspected and approved by the Amherst Historical Commission, and a permanent historic preservation restriction transferred from the Museum to the Town.
9. Expectations for additional funding in future years: If the project moves forward, the Historical Society & Museum will undertake a fundraising campaign, which may include the request of future CPA funds.
10. Funding available: See answers above.
11. Priority set by Commission: Priority ranking not yet assigned by Commission

Amherst Historical Society
Proposal for CPA Funds
November 15, 2010

The Amherst Historical Society requests \$25,000 in CPA funds for a feasibility study to determine:

- 1) How to preserve the integrity of the structure of the Strong House while adding an addition to the rear of the building. The addition will provide much-needed exhibition, program, and collection storage space. The addition of a room or rooms to the rear of the Strong House will put an added strain on the 1760s structure: the number of visitors through the house will add weight and strain on the floors and foundation, excavation for a full basement will impact the already wobbly foundation of the Strong House.
- 2) The size, configuration, and cost of a climate-controlled storage facility for the 1,500 plus artifacts that the Amherst Historical Society cares for. The collection is presently stored in restricted upper level closets and spare rooms or is on display in the Strong House, which is unheated; the temperature and humidity fluctuates wildly. The weight of proper shelving adds an added strain on the upper level floors. The confined storage areas make it difficult for researchers to work with the collection. The new storage facility will be located in an underground facility beneath the Strong House addition.
The collection spans over five centuries of Amherst's history, from the pre – revolutionary war period to 2010. The prized objects include the town's official weights and measures dating from the late 1700s, signs from local businesses such as the 18th century Nash Tavern and the Boltwood Hotel, a Civil War Collection that includes a field doctor's medical kit, a soldier's uniform, and soldier's portraits. The Society also holds the art and personal artifacts of Mabel Loomis Todd and the only surviving dress owned by Emily Dickinson.

We seek the funds for the preparation of a feasibility study for this addition.

In kind services:

John Kuhn, architect, pro bono

Don Teagno: an estimate of construction costs [ask him]

Paid services

Collections storage consultant (I recommend Marianne Curling, former curator, Mark Twain Hs)

Consultant to run the feasibility study

Matt Blumenfeld, Financial Development Agency (discount)

This request comes after 18 months of long-range planning on the part of the AHS Board of Trustees. In 2009, the Board held two community engagement sessions lead by a consultant with funds from a Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts grant. The two follow-up reports guided us in long range planning sessions of the Board from April to October 2010.

Amherst Historical Society
Proposal for CPA Funds
December 7 , 2010

The Amherst Historical Society requests \$25,000 in CPA funds for a feasibility study which will be the first step toward preserving the Strong House, preserving the Society's collections and possibly adding a public meeting room. The study is to determine:

- 1) How to preserve the integrity of the structure of the Strong House while adding an extension to the rear of the building, which will provide much-needed exhibition, program, meeting and collection storage space. The addition of a room or rooms to the rear of the Strong House will put an added strain on the 1760s structure; the number of visitors through the house will add weight and strain on the floors and foundation, and excavation for a full basement will impact the already insecure foundation of the Strong House.
- 2) The size, configuration, and cost of a climate-controlled storage facility for the 1,500 plus artifacts that the Amherst Historical Society cares for. The collections are presently stored in restricted upper level closets and spare rooms or are on display in the Strong House, which is unheated, causing extreme fluctuations of temperature and humidity which damage the artifacts. The weight of the collections adds an added strain on the upper level floors. The confined storage areas make it difficult for researchers to work with the collections. The new storage facility would be located in an underground facility beneath the Strong House addition.

The collections span over five centuries of Amherst's history, from the pre-revolutionary war period to 2010. The prized objects include the town's official weights and measures dating from the late 1700s, signs from local businesses such as the 18th century Nash Tavern and the Boltwood Hotel, a Civil War Collection that includes a field doctor's medical kit, a soldier's uniform, and soldiers' portraits. The Society also holds the art and personal artifacts of Mabel Loomis Todd and the only surviving dress owned by Emily Dickinson.

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Here is our budget:

AHS can envision an expenditure of \$2 million dollars to bring the Strong House up to museum standards, to add a wing to the building, and to create an endowment for upkeep in future years . We have found a reputable local fund-raising firm that could deliver a financial feasibility report for about \$10,000 to \$12,000. If this study should show that raising such a sum is not currently feasible, then we will have to scale back our plans accordingly.

For structural evaluations by professional engineers we estimate needing \$3000 to \$5000.

For design work we estimate architectural fees of \$3000 to \$5000.

For construction cost estimates we estimate needing \$3000 to \$5000.

To preserve our collections we foresee paying a consultant to evaluate our storage space needs and recommend the right climate controls. For this study we anticipate a cost of \$3000 to \$12,350.

To make sure that our project is designed to the best museum standards, we plan to include a peer review process, seeking comments from the leaders of other history museums in the region. For this we estimate a cost of \$1000 to 2000.

For a professional market researcher to gather further input from the community about potential users of the proposed public meeting room we estimate a cost of \$1000 to \$2000

To secure relief in probate court from the restrictions imposed on the Strong House by a 1916 will, AHS estimates it will need \$1000 to \$2000 for legal services.

Budget Summary:

Financial feasibility	\$10,000 to \$12,000	
Engineering	3,000	5,000
Design/Architect	3,000	5,000
Construction Cost Estimating	3,000	5,000
Collections Consultant	3,000	12,350
Peer Review	1,000	2,000
Community Input Research	1,000	2,000
Legal	1,000	2,000
Total	\$25,000	\$45,350

In securing the services listed above, AHS intends to rely wherever possible on donated or discounted professional services and to keep all costs to a minimum. Therefore some of the cost figures listed above may be reduced, but we anticipate needing the entire \$25,000.

The goal is to provide a suitable museum for Amherst history for the community to be proud of 100 or 150 years from now.